

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph 1 beginning on page 2 on line 9, with the following amended paragraph:

β1:
17^A 10/21/03
This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/077,815, filed March 12, 1998. This application also claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/267,436, filed March 12, 1999, which is now abandoned. This application is a Continuation In Part of U.S. Nonprovisional Application Serial No. 09/732,606 filed December 8, 2000, ^{new U.S. patent 6,503,037}

Please replace the paragraph 3, beginning on page 8, line 18, with the following amended paragraph:

β2
Another component of the overall system is a substantially flat foam strut covering piece 24, as seen in Figure 5, that goes over the supporting posts on struts 26 of a conventional railcar, as seen in Figures [[9]] 8 and [[10]] 9. These struts are between sections of the railcar side walls, and the covering piece 24 serves to provide protection between these side wall sections where protection is not provided by the double or single tube protectors 12 or 18. The covering piece 24 may be of varying length and width to accommodate various types and sizes of supporting struts. The strut covering piece 24 should be wide enough to offer protection for various heights of door trim. Multiple slots 28 along the edges of the post covering piece 24 are adapted to accommodate penetrating fasteners and allow for ample fastening flexibility. Also shown in Figures 8 and 9 are a cross brace covering piece 32 to add protection wherever cross bracing is used in the railcar. The covering piece 32 may be of varying length and width to accommodate various types and sizes of cross bracing.

Please replace the paragraph 2, beginning on page 9, line 9, with the following amended paragraph:

B3

With specific reference to Figure 6, the preferred fastening system is a fastener 34 with a large head 38 having a pair of penetrating legs 37a and 37b separated by a space 37c. This configuration assures resilience in two legs. Each leg has special locking edges 36a and 36b designed specifically for the side panels of a conventional autorack railcar. There are preferably two pair of locking edges. The first pair of locking edges 36a (toward the fastener head 38) are engaged with the exterior of the steel side panel when a single layer of foam [[14]] 24 is applied. When the fastener 34 needs to attach two layers of foam [[14]] 24 to the steel side panel, as in the case of an overlap of adjacent system parts, the second pair of locking edges 36b is engaged with the exterior of the steel side panel.

Please replace the paragraph 4, beginning on page 9, line 23, with the following amended paragraph:

B4

At those portions of the railcar where no holes in the side screening walls exist, known to one of skill in the art as "Logo" panels, the original foam material [[14]] 24 of the present invention is either glued to the walls or holes can be drilled for the fasteners 34. The variously formed embodiments of the invention may be used together in the conventional autorack railcar as shown in Figure 8 and 9.

Please replace the paragraph 3, beginning on page 13, line 12, with the following amended paragraph:

B5

It has also been determined that the improved fastener 134 can be advantageously mounted with use of a large washer 150 under the button head 138. This feature enables improved mechanical fastening of the foam, with a combination of effectively changing the tolerances -- the depth of the fastener or dimension between the underside of the head 138 and the lips or barbs 136a, 136[[]]b, that engage the exterior surface of the autorack car panels, and also increasing the surface area of foam captured between the button head 138 and the autorack car side wall panels. The use of multiple the lips or barbs 136a and 136b on

bn

the button provides greater options in applying the system in the field -- a tight fit being permitted either with or without the washer 150.
